

AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

Claims 1, 8, 9, 11-14, 17, 18, 21-26, 29, 35, 42-45 and 48 are being amended, claims 3 and 27 are being canceled, and new claims 49-53 are being added. All pending claims are reproduced below, including those that remain unchanged.

1. (Currently Amended) An integrated sterilization and transportation system for radioactive seed strand implants, comprising:

a seed strand carrier adapted to carry a plurality of seed strands and strands of spacer material;

a measuring and cutting board; and

a shielded envelope;

wherein said seed strand carrier and said measuring and cutting board are slidably housed in said shielded envelope.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the strand carrier comprises a plurality of adjacent tubes, each tube being adapted to carry one seed strand or one strand of spacer material.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the system is adapted to be sterilized using Ethylene Oxide gas.

5. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the shielded envelope has a lead lining.
6. (Original) The system of claim 5, wherein the lead lining is at least 0.25mm thick.
7. (Original) The system of claim 5, wherein the lead lining is between 0.25mm and 0.40 mm thick.
8. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein the strand carrier is slidably connected to the measuring and cutting board.
9. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 8;~~ An integrated sterilization and transportation system for radioactive seed strand implants, comprising:
a seed strand carrier adapted to carry a plurality of seed strands;
a measuring and cutting board; and
a shielded envelope;
wherein the strand carrier is slidably connected to the measuring and cutting board; and
wherein pulling on the measuring and cutting board slidably extends the strand carrier from the shielded envelope.
10. (Original) The system of claim 9, further comprising a pull-out tab integral with the measuring and cutting board.

11. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 9, further comprising means to prevent the strand carrier from completely advancing beyond the mouth of the shielded envelope.

12. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 11, wherein said means to prevent the strand carrier from completely advancing beyond the mouth of the shielded envelope comprises flexible sheet material.

13. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 11, wherein said means to prevent the strand carrier from completely advancing beyond the mouth of the shielded envelope comprises plastic stoppers.

14. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 1, further comprising~~ An integrated sterilization and transportation system for radioactive seed strand implants, comprising:

a seed strand carrier adapted to carry a plurality of seed strands;

a measuring and cutting board;

a shielded envelope; and

a pouch, said pouch housing said seed strand carrier, ~~the seed strands and strands of spacer material,~~ said measuring and cutting board and said shielded envelope.

15. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein the pouch is permeable to Ethylene Oxide gas.

16. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein carried seed strands remain shielded by the shielded envelope until the user retrieves each individual strand.

17. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein the measuring and cutting board has markings to aid in measuring ~~denoting a~~ desired length of a seed strand segment.

18. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 17, wherein ~~a desired length of seed strand segment is measured and cut on~~ the measuring and cutting board is adapted to be used to measure and cut a desired length of a seed strand segment.

19. (Original) The system of claim 17, wherein the measuring and cutting board has marked grooves to aid in the cutting of seed strand segments.

20. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the system is adapted to carry the entire prescription requirement of one patient.

21. (Currently Amended) A method of sterilizing and transporting a plurality of radioactive seed strand implants, comprising the steps of:

loading a plurality of seed strands into a strand carrier, said strand carrier being slidably connected to a measuring and cutting board[[,]];

inserting the strand carrier and measuring and cutting board into a shielded envelope[[,]];

inserting the shielded envelope into a ~~paper~~ pouch and sealing the ~~paper~~ pouch;

sterilizing the pouch and its contents; and
sealing the shielded envelope through the sealed pouch.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the ~~paper~~ pouch and its contents are sterilized using Ethylene Oxide gas.

23. (Currently Amended) A method for use in interstitial radiation therapy ~~implanting a plurality of radioactive seed strand implants~~, comprising the steps of:

receiving a plurality of seed strands in a container assembly~~[[,]]~~, said container assembly comprising a measuring and cutting board and a seed strand carrier housed inside a shielded envelope~~[[,]]~~;

retrieving a seed strand from the seed strand carrier~~[[,]]~~;

using the measuring and cutting board to measure and cut a desired length of seed strand segment; and

loading said seed segment into an implantation needle.

24. (Currently Amended) A method of sterilizing a plurality of seed strand implants, comprising the steps of:

loading a plurality of seed strands into a container assembly~~[[,]]~~, said container assembly comprising a measuring and cutting board, a seed strand carrier adapted to carry a plurality of seed strands, and a shielded envelope to house said measuring and cutting board and seed strand carrier;

sealing the container assembly in a pouch~~[[,]]~~;

sterilizing said pouch and its contents; and
sealing said shielded envelope.

25. (Currently Amended) An integrated sterilization and transportation system for radioactive seed strand implants, comprising:

a seed strand carrier;
at least one seed strand being carried by said strand carrier;
a measuring and cutting board; ~~and~~
a shielded envelope; and
a pouch, said pouch housing said seed strand carrier, at least one seed strand, said measuring and cutting board and said shielded envelope.

26. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 25, further comprising at least one strand of spacer material being ~~carrier~~ carried by said strand carrier.

27. (Canceled)

28. (Original) The system of claim 25, wherein said strand carrier is slidably connected to said measuring and cutting board.

29. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 25,~~ An integrated sterilization and transportation system for radioactive seed strand implants, comprising:

a seed strand carrier;

at least one seed strand being carried by said strand carrier;

a measuring and cutting board; and

a shielded envelope;

wherein said seed strand carrier, at least one seed strand and measuring and cutting board are slidably housed inside said ~~shield~~ shielded envelope.

30. (Original) The system of claim 25, wherein the seed strand carrier comprises a plurality of adjacent tubes, each tube being adapted to carry one seed strand or one strand of spacer material.

31. (Original) The system of claim 25, wherein the system is adapted to be sterilized using Ethylene Oxide gas.

32. (Original) The system of claim 25, wherein the shielded envelope has a lead lining.

33. (Original) The system of claim 32, wherein the lead lining is at least 0.25mm thick.

34. (Original) The system of claim 32, wherein the lead lining is between 0.25mm and 0.40 mm thick.

35. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 28;~~ An integrated sterilization and transportation system for radioactive seed strand implants, comprising:

a seed strand carrier;

at least one seed strand being carried by said strand carrier;
a measuring and cutting board; and
a shielded envelope;
wherein said strand carrier is slidably connected to said measuring and cutting board;
and
wherein pulling on the measuring and cutting board slidably extends the strand carrier.

36. (Original) The system of claim 35, further comprising a pull-out tab integral with the measuring and cutting board.

37. (Original) The system of claim 35, further comprising means to prevent the strand carrier from advancing beyond the mouth of the shielded envelope.

38. (Original) The system of claim 37, wherein said means to prevent the strand carrier from advancing beyond the mouth of the shielded envelope comprises a flexible hinge.

39. (Original) The system of claim 38, wherein said flexible hinge is connected to the strand carrier, measuring and cutting board and shielded envelope.

40. (Original) The system of claim 37, wherein said means to prevent the strand carrier from advancing beyond the mouth of the shielded envelope comprises solid stoppers.

41. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein at least one solid stopper is integral with the shielded envelope.

42. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~27~~ 25, wherein the pouch is permeable to Ethylene Oxide gas.

43. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 25, wherein said shielded envelope is to shield each said seed strand until a user removes the seed strand from said shielded envelope
~~said at least one seed strand remain shielded by the shielded envelope until the user retrieves each individual strand.~~

44 (Currently Amended) The system of claim 25, wherein the measuring and cutting board has markings that can be used to measure ~~denoting~~ a desired length of a seed strand segment.

45. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 44, wherein ~~a desired length of seed strand segment is measured and cut on~~ the measuring and cutting board is adapted be used to measure and cut a desired length of a seed strand segment.

46. (Original) The system of claim 44, wherein the measuring and cutting board has marked grooves to aid in the cutting of seed strand segments.

47. (Original) The system of claim 25, wherein the system is adapted to carry the entire prescription requirement of one patient.

48. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 25,~~ An integrated sterilization and transportation system for radioactive seed strand implants, comprising:

a seed strand carrier;

at least one seed strand being carried by said strand carrier;

a measuring and cutting board; and

a shielded envelope;

wherein the seed strand carrier, the measuring and cutting board and the shielded envelope are slidably connected to each other by a flexible hinge.

49. (New) An integrated sterilization and transportation system for radioactive seed strand implants, comprising:

a seed strand carrier adapted to carry a plurality of seed strands;

at plurality of seed strands carried in said strand carrier;

a shielded envelope housing said strand carrier, with said plurality of seed strands carried in said strand carrier; and

a pouch housing said shielded envelope, which is housing said strand carrier, which is carrying said plurality of seed strands.

50. (New) The system of claim 49, wherein said pouch is permeable to a sterilization gas.

51. (New) The system of claim 50, wherein said pouch is permeable to Ethylene Oxide gas.

52. (New) The system of claim 49, further comprising a board that can be used to measures lengths of said seed strands.

53. (New) The system of claim 52, wherein the board includes grooves to aid in cutting of seed strand segments.